

1st Annual ICTF “Board Award” for Child Abuse Prevention Awarded to BabySteps



Mickey Harmer- ICTF Board Member; Holly Mason - BabySteps Manager; Lynn Miner - ICTF Board Member; Diane Demarest - BabySteps Founder; Dean Rich Demarest - St. Michael's Cathedral; James Herrmann - ICTF Board Member; Chrystie Brassey - BabySteps Volunteer; Marilyn Giddings - ICTF Board Member; Joan Nelson - BabySteps Volunteer; Annette Compton - BabySteps Volunteer; R. Monte MacConnell - ICTF Board Chair; Mary Marshall - ICTF Board Member.

BabySteps Prenatal & Parenting Education Program through St. Michael's Cathedral in Boise received \$5,000 and the distinction of being the first ever “Board Award” winner! Board Chair Monte MacConnell said that “BabySteps is the epitome of a successful community-based child abuse prevention program, and we are thrilled to support their program with a \$5,000 check.”

The “Board Award” is an annual award created by the members of the Idaho Children's Trust Fund Board to recognize and reward a particular child abuse prevention effort in Idaho that is creative, innovative and impacts the community in a positive way by *preventing* the abuse and neglect of children. According to the “Board Award” guidelines, the efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect undertaken by the applicant should be innovative, creative, collaborative, able to be replicated, have a positive impact on the community, receive community support, and occur in Idaho.

In choosing to honor child abuse prevention strategies, Executive Director Nancy Hausner stated, “We are staying true to our mission of preventing child abuse before it ever occurs, which results in healthy kids, healthy families and healthy communities. The ICTF is very excited to begin this new way of recognizing and honoring those who are dedicated to the prevention of child abuse.”

The 2006 “Board Award” finalists were Familias Saludables of St. Luke's Center for Community Health in Hailey, Family Services Alliance in Pocatello, Grand Teton Council / Boy Scouts of America in Idaho Falls and Shepherd's Home in McCall.

According to the winning application submitted by BabySteps founder Diane Demarest,

“BabySteps Prenatal & Parenting Education Program began at St. Michael's Cathedral in February 2003. Now beginning its fourth year of operation, BabySteps has welcomed over 400 limited-income women, along with their families into a program of education and support to promote healthier pregnancies, babies and families by increasing knowledge, empathy and support. We believe that gains in each of these areas helps participants develop positive parenting practices to promote optimal child development and prevent child abuse and neglect.

Even though BabySteps engages parents for just the first year or so of a child's life, it may have a lasting impact. Parents who develop skills to support their child's early development are more likely to stay engaged and support their child's continued learning. The outcome for each child lies in greater possibilities and realized potential – when abuse is prevented each child has the possibility to develop more fully. When children are cared for by adults who nurture them and do not abuse or neglect them, they are more likely to become adults who nurture children.”

Any agency, organization or individual engaged in efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect in Idaho is eligible to apply. This includes, but is not limited to: non-profits, government agencies, schools, hospitals, foster parents, faith communities, child care centers, coalitions, private counseling centers, homeless shelters, and service clubs. Applications for the ICTF “Board Award” for 2007 will be on our website on January 2, 2007.